

**CONFIDENTIAL**

2 APR 1959

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Director of Training

Language Proficiency Awards

REFERENCE: Your Undated Memo, "Criteria for Language Awards"

1. I agree that too narrow an interpretation of the criteria for language awards can have deleterious effects, but I think that in the cases to which you refer there is misunderstanding about the types of awards that your officers can receive and the ground rules governing awards. The Agency's program of developing language competencies is based on recognizing effort which individuals make in this direction. Necessary to this development is study, formal or informal, and in recognition of the kind of effort that goes into this, with increased proficiency in a language the result, money is granted in the form of an Achievement Award. Keeping proficiency, if it takes appreciable effort, is recognized in the form of a Maintenance Award.

25X1A

2. [redacted] case is one in which there was no increase in his proficiency beyond the intermediate level, nor did he keep that level through appreciable effort: consequently, no monetary compensation. His level of proficiency remains awardable and between now and June 1959 when he is eligible to be tested again for maintenance of his skill, he may find it necessary to expend considerable outside effort, particularly since he is now stationed at headquarters. In the interim, a way is open to him: he can acquire high comprehensive proficiency. In essence, this is the striving. It will take effort and the proficiency, if attained, will be awarded as achievement. Thereafter this high comprehensive competency can be tested in terms of a Maintenance Award.

25X1A

3. This distinction between maintenance and achievement of language skills is important in the cases of your officers in the field. For improvement [redacted] which can come from their daily conduct of business they will be eligible for Achievement Awards. They are soundly encouraged to improve their competencies and it is not the intent of the program to discourage this ambition. Certainly useful-to-the-service proficiency is a primary goal of the enterprise and these officers should be given every assistance in keeping skills useful. Their working in the country of the language does not disqualify them for awards for any success or achievement they may demonstrate. Nor, in some cases does it

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disqualify them for Maintenance Awards. We agree that working in the country is a tremendous asset in perfecting the language of the population and, in return for their availing themselves of the local opportunity to acquire even greater skill, the Language Development Program has a built-in asset of monetary compensation. It also has restrictions necessarily designed to prevent any windfalls. It is only when officers are ineligible for Maintenance Awards by regulatory limitations that they are encouraged to study another of the Agency's critical languages. This is done more as an incentive to continue as active participants in the program and meanwhile, to increase the Agency's language reservoir.

4. In response to the inquiry as to eligibility for Maintenance Awards for those proficient enough to teach in their spare time, let me assure you that they are eligible, unless otherwise excluded by regulation. This is considered an off-hours or voluntary effort.

SIGNED

MATTHEW BAIRD

Distribution:

Orig. & 1 - Addressee  
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